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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/626,783	07/24/2003	Michael Lebner	0156-2007US01	1197
Kevin M. Farrell Pierce Atwood Suite 350 One New Hampshire Avenue Portsmouth, NH 03801				
7590 09/14/2009				
EXAMINER				
ERIZO, DARWIN P				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3773				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
09/14/2009		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/626,783

Applicant(s)

LEBNER, MICHAEL

Examiner

Darwin P. Erez

Art Unit

3773

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 June 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office action is in response to the applicant's communication filed on 6/19/09.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 1-16 and 19-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 2004/0204740 to Weiser in view of US 2,798,492 to Barnes et al.

Weiser discloses an interlaced, two-component device for closing a laceration or incision (see Fig. 7 for interlaced configuration), the device including a 1st component – 1a with adhesive on the back surface; a 2nd component 1b also with an adhesive backed surface; connecting members 5a,b; and adhesive on the top of 1a,b or the bottom of 5a,b attaches the connecting members to the anchoring members. The connection of the connecting members to the anchoring members forming two components-a bridging portion extending over the area between adjacent surfaces of the two anchoring members and attached portions-the part actually adhered to the top surface of 1a,b. The exposed adhesive portions are covered by release liners. The very ends of the connecting members would constitute the claimed pulling elements. The different elements and the release liners are all coded with either colors or printed numbers. See paragraphs 17,18 and 46, along with Figs. 5-7 and 10.

Weiser is silent with regards to the average width of the bridging portions being less than that of the attached portions. Instead, Weiser discloses bridging portions having the same width as the attached portions

However, providing a wound closure device with bridging portions having an average width less than an attached portion is well known in the art, as shown in Fig. 2 and 5 of Barnes. Thus, Barnes discloses a bridging/attached portion arrangement that is an equivalent structure known in the art.

Therefore, because these two bridging/attached portions arrangement were art-recognized equivalents at the time the invention was made, one of ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to substitute the bridging/attached portion arrangement of Jacoby for the bridging/attached portion arrangement of Weiser. Furthermore, it has been held that a simple substitution for one known element for another will be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art since the substitution will yield predictable results. *KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 127 S.Ct. 1727, 1742, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1396 (2007).

It is further noted that having an attached portion with a wider width than the bridging portion provides more surface area contact for the device against the skin. Also, having a bridging portion with a width less than the attached portion inherently provides greater flexibility for the device.

6. Claims 17 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weiser in view of Barnes et al., as applied to the rejections above, and in further view of US 5,263,970 to Preller.

The modified device of Weiser makes obvious the invention as claimed with the exception of the pull bar. Preller discloses that it was known to provide similar articles with pull bars-28. It would have been obvious to have provided Weiser with pull bars in order to produce a substantial pulling element for applying traction.

7. Claims 18 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weiser in view of Barnes et al., as applied to the rejections above, and in further view of US 5,979,450 to Baker.

The modified device of Weiser makes obvious the invention as claimed with the exception of the reinforced wound edge bar. Baker discloses that it was known to provide such (22) on a drape adhesively attached to skin. It would have been obvious to have provided Weiser with such a reinforcement in order to reduce the possibility of wrinkling of the sheets adhered to the skin.

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments filed 6/19/09 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicant argued that combination of Weiser and Barnes fails to disclose the amended limitation of an interlaced, two-component device. It was argued separately that Weiser fails to disclose a device having bridging portions being less than the averaged width of the attach portions, and that Barnes discloses a unitary device (not interlaced). This is not found persuasive as the proposed modification by the Examiner to the Weiser reference merely requires modifying the width of the bridging portions to be similar to the teachings of Barnes. Thus, the Weiser reference itself will disclose a device that uses two components in an interlaced configuration (see Fig. 7), and wherein the bridging portions will be modified using the teachings of Barnes to have a width that is lesser than the width of the attached portions. Having a thinner bridging portions lessens the possibility of the bridging portions adhering to the wound opening, while having a thicker attached portion enhances the anchoring stability of the attached portions.

Conclusion

9. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Darwin P. Erezo whose telephone number is (571)272-4695. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:00-4:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jackie Ho can be reached on (571) 272-4696. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3773

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Darwin P. Erezol/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3773